(c) the details available with the Government of the grants released so far for the said purpose by the different corporates and NGOs during 2004-05 and 2005-06?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMDOSS): (a) to (c) As per information received from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in 2005, they have awarded a grant of $24.3 million to be paid over five years for preventing infant mortality and morbidity at the community level. The grant was awarded to Partnership for Appropriate Technologies in Health (PATH) for a project named the Sure Start project. PATH have informed Government of India that they are an international non-profit organization. Further, they have stated that Sure Start is an initiative intended to significantly reduce maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality in selected districts of Uttar Pradesh and urban areas of Maharashtra. PATH has also informed that Sure Start has been designed to complement and support Government of India's commitment to improving maternal and newborn health, with special attention to the National Rural Health Mission, the second phase of the Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH-2) and State level policies and programmes.

Government has been informed that Sure Start promotes integrated attention to both maternal and newborn health, within a broader continuum of health services and programmes and it also supports the scaling up of promising approaches, leveraging the successes of pilot projects across entire districts or urban areas. PATH has clarified that Sure Start does not have a mandate to take up any programme for the control of diseases such as Kala Azar and Malaria.

The Government has been informed by ASSOCHAM and CII (FICCI have not responded), that these apex bodies have no information available of any grants that may have been released so far for the said purpose by different corporates. This is also true in so far as NGOs are concerned.

Small scale drug manufacturers

*11. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the small scale drug manufacturers are

facing difficulties due to high excise duties, manufacturing costs, etc;

(b) if so, whether any representation or appeal has been received from the drug Manufacturing Association of Andhra Pradesh;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the action that has been contemplated by Government on such request;

(d) whether it is also a fact that excise duty has been exempted in some of the States while the other States are still reeling under high excise duty; and

(e) if so, the reasons for such discrimination?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (e) The Government has received representations regarding the problems being faced by small scale drug manufacturing units in some of the States, consequent upon the levy of central excise duty on drugs on the retail prices in lieu of the earlier practice of levying central excise duty on ex-factory price. The problem has accentuated due to existing Central excise duty exemption to the States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Jammu and Kashmir.

These representations were examined by the Government. In order to mitigate the rigours of excise duty regime and to provide a level playing field for small units, this Department has proposed the following measures to be considered by the Department of Revenue:

(i) Reduction of the excise duty on all pharmaceutical products from 16 to 8 percent;

(ii) Enhance the exemption limit of small scale units from the present Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 5 crores.

However, no representation or appeal has been received from the Drug manufacturing Association of the State of Andhra Pradesh.

As per the decision earlier taken by the Government the Central Excise duty has been exempted on manufactured goods including drugs, in notified areas of Uttaranchal, Himachal, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Kutch, and North Eastern States.